

Parlange Plantation, New Roads Vicinity
Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana

HABS No. La. 34

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Louisiana

Historic American Buildings Survey
Richard Koch, District Officer
908 Queen & Crescent Building, New Orleans, La.

PARLANGE PLANTATION

Date of Erection

Between 1830 and 1840.

Builder

Unknown; probably Colonel Charles Parlange or a Denis.

Present Condition

Good.

Number of Stories

One, with basement and attic.

Materials of Construction

Basement of brick - first story, frame plastered - walls filled with either brick or mud and moss (brique et entre poteaux). Roof, cypress shingles.

Other Existing Records

Court records not examined. Old Louisiana, Saxon; Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana, Spratling & Scott.

Additional Data

On the high banks of False River in Pointe Coupee Parish, stands Parlange at the end of an avenue of cypress and against a grove of oaks. It is one of the last of the plantation houses built in the tradition that was brought to Louisiana from the French Islands of the West Indies. This Parish was an early French settlement; traditions have lingered long and the only innovations were decorations and details of new styles brought to the plantation from New Orleans, but the forms are the survivals of another day. Well can we believe the tradition that the house was built by the Marquis Vincent de Ternant at the middle of the eighteenth century when he acquired the land through a French grant. The property then passed to his son, Vincent, and later was inherited by his widow of a second marriage. She remarried, her husband being a French Army officer, Colonel Charles

Parlange. Their son, Charles, who died in 1907, was the father of Walter Parlange who now manages the plantation and lives in the old home.

The plan of Parlange is typical of the early larger houses; in the center are two drawing rooms with bed rooms on each end. Behind the bed rooms are dressing rooms which form the ends of a large enclosed rear porch. A gallery, broad on the front but narrow on the sides and rear, completely surrounds the living quarters, giving circulation while providing shelter from the heat and rain of summer. The rear gallery was added and obviously the dining room as is, was an afterthought. Slender wood colonettes on the squat brick columns of the basement support the high pitched French roof; and, as is common in similar roofs, the side roofs are more steeply pitched, giving the mass a strong horizontal feeling, while the rear has a double pitch most picturesque when viewed from under the large oaks on the east. The original covering of the roof was of cypress shingles, but these, except on the east side, have been replaced with shingles of asbestos. There is a staircase to the attic, and the basement was used for general storage. The kitchen originally was to the left of the house, detached, and was recently moved to its present position. The front stairs are modern; there are no indications of their having been inside the front porch as was customary. The interior rear stairs to the gallery are old and the detail of the turned newel is in scale with the turned colonettes and railings, which are vigorous and remind one of days when materials and labor were plentiful. A small cornice follows

around the porch, a collection of mouldings somewhat confused, and the principal interior rooms also have complicated cornices, the sources of which cannot be explained.

The walls of the basement are of brick whitewashed as are also the floors, though the later ^{or} are scrubbed and reddened with brick dust, an old Louisiana custom. The first story walls are of a wood frame filled in with brick ^{or mud and moss} and then plastered, a medieval form of construction brought to Louisiana by the French and known as Briqueté entre Poteaux.

Judging from the details of the interior, the house was erected between 1830 and 1840. There is the possibility that in the 30's an older house was remodeled by the addition of a rear gallery, and the present dining room brought out to fill in the first small rear porch. This gave the double break to the rear roof, a common form, but the double row of columns is the only example in Louisiana. Due to the soft alluvial soil of this section, there has been much settlement of the brick columns, which condition was taken care of with wedges and alterations to the wood caps of the brick columns, so it is impossible to distinguish if they are of different periods. An examination of the roof showed no condition to justify the contention that an earlier house was remodelled; there is only the feeling that Parlange belongs to the houses built around 1800 and before the Greek Revival had reached Louisiana. Only after the building was drawn and studied, was it obvious that the trim and mouldings are after 1830. In Natchitoches the Prudhomme houses

that date from 1830 are similar West Indian types with simple Greek Revival details.

The doorways are glazed French casements and with an interesting treatment of the transoms. An elliptical fan fills the square transom, the muntins springing from a carved rosette, and the corners are filled with an archaic flower of carved wood, another interesting variation similar to Fannie Riche (HABS No. La. 35). Probably the derivation of these transoms is English of the Regency. The double hung windows on the sides have similar transoms, a most unusual treatment. All openings have solid panelled shutters. The trim is reeded with square blocks at the corners, details which are foreign to the older atmosphere of the house and, like the mantels, are variations of Greek Revival designs. Identical mantels may be found in houses built in New Orleans after 1830. There is the local tradition that Parlange and similar houses were built by mulattoes from the West Indies, and some of the detail may be an echo of early Victorian work in the tropics.

The dormers are small with high pointed gables, which give them a decided French character; the window-panes of glass are small like those in other parts of this neighborhood.

On each side of the approach to the house was a formal garden, and in their centers still stand two octagonal pigeoniers of whitewashed brick with steep shingle roofs and turned wood finials. In the foreign atmosphere of False River these accessory buildings of the Louisiana plantations, so well related to the main house,

recall the groupings of the smaller European Manor Houses of the
eighteenth century.

Richard Koch
Richard Koch
District Officer

received May 22, 1939 JH-



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Pasadena Plant
Copy 8



Original in LOT 12578-13 (H)

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District Officer

reviewed May 22, 1939 JAO-

ADDENDUM TO
PARLANGE PLANTATION
Louisiana State Highway 93
New Roads Vicinity
Point Coupee Parish
Louisiana

HABS No. LA-34

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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Department of the Interior
National Park Service
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Washington, DC 20013-7127